

March 24, 2011

TO: Judiciary Committee

521 House Office Building

Lansing, Michigan

RE: House Bill 4106

Hello All. I am sorry that I could not attend in person this morning, as the above mentioned bill is very important to me. I have followed this bill for the past 3 years. I have written numerous letters to various past sponsors and co-sponsors, speaker of the house, and judiciary committee members in support of this bill.

My name is Yashica Ellis and I am a past offender. You see over 16 years ago, I committed a very unnecessary and senseless crime (Embezzlement Agent Over \$100 750.174B). I was 19 and did not understand the enormity of my actions until much later in life.

Since that time, I have grown up and turned my life around. I have completed a Bachelor's Degree in Health Services Administration from Baker College of Flint. At the time, I was under the impression that once I paid the restitution in full, I would be granted an expungement. I did not understand that the subsequent misdemeanor convictions (traffic violations, driving while license suspended) would prohibit me from seeing this through and moving on with my life. Now, I am the owner of a BA that's virtually worthless as long as this cloud is hanging over my head.

Currently, I work part-time for the college. I was able to obtain this job because at the time, part-time employees were not subjected to the scrutiny full-time employees underwent. I did not have to divulge any past criminal history. Unfortunately, I have hit the glass ceiling so to speak within an entry level position because I cannot apply for other opportunities because of this dark cloud. I am fearful that one day I will have no choice but to accept a full-time position as the workload continues to grow as we experience record enrollment. In doing so, I will have to submit to background checks that will inevitably cause me to lose my job.

I have an 8 year old son, whom I have to support. It is increasingly harder and harder to do. The boy is healthy and happy and growing up extremely fast! I have student loans that I owe and would not be able to manage if it weren't for programs like Income Based Repayment Plan and DHS welfare programs. I gross annually around \$17,500, which according to DHS is below the poverty line for a family of 2.

I am not asking for a handout but a solution here. We have dropped the ball for at least the past 3 years in getting this bill to where it needs to go. I don't believe my past offenses define who I am today, who I will be tomorrow, or even who I was yesterday. I don't believe it's fair to judge a person based on their mistakes, especially when they have demonstrated the ability to learn from and rise above them. When

it's all said and done, no one cares about the good you have done, most only reflect on the bad. That, my friends, is a very sad truth that plagues people like me and deprives us from obtaining the glorious comeback we so desperately desire.

I wholeheartedly urge you to make an earnest attempt to see this bill through the legislation process and enacted into law. You cannot ignore the fact that local courts throughout Michigan have seen a drastic increase in people trying to have convictions cleared from their records. In Genesee County alone, courts had 120 requests for expungement in 2008, according to the State Attorney General's Office. Statewide, there were 3,019 requests compared with 2,005 in 2005. Many of whom are just like me in regards to being a nonviolent offender whom simply woke up and took responsibility by going back to school in order to find meaningful employment and take care of their families.

I know some of you may be split on this issue, maybe they understand that some people deserve a second chance but there are those with violent crimes in their past who are cause for concern. Some people simply feel that maybe we should not have our records cleared. I am not saying I know the answer. Maybe they should, maybe they should not. That does not mean everyone should be treated the same either. Ultimately, it should be up to the judge to decide whether or not it's true or false for that particular individual when their time comes for redemption. All I am saying to all of you today is we should have the opportunity to try to be better human beings in spite of our past errors in judgment.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Yashica S Ellis



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
GENESEE COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT PROBATION

PATRICIA L. CARUSO
DIRECTOR

May 12, 2009

To: Michigan Legislative Committee

From: Denise Smith Allen, Probation Agent
Michigan Department of Corrections

Subject: Yashica Ellis and HB 4405 (4106)

It is indeed an honor and privilege to submit this letter of recommendation for the above offender. Ms. Ellis was under supervision with me during her probationary term. As with many young people, poor decision making can produce dire consequences that impact their future life circumstances.

Ms. Ellis has made a complete turn around from the person she was at 20 years old. Her education has been a catalyst for change and in the field that she pursued it is paramount for her record to be expunged. The subsequent misdemeanor convictions of driving while license suspended while serious is not the most heinous crime however is more reflective of not understanding the repercussions of her actions.

What is most important is that Ms. Ellis has taken care of these matters in a timely fashion and is motivated to further her education by obtaining a Masters in Public Administration with a concentration in Health Care. It would be a travesty of justice to prevent her from being a law abiding taxpayer who is involved with a vocation that she has worked hard to pursue.

(4106)
It is my hope that that HB 4405 will be adopted which would allow countless persons like Ms. Ellis to become productive citizens and break the cycle of recidivism based on lack of opportunity.

If you are in need of further information, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience at 310.424.4733.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise Smith Allen
Probation Agent



THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
FLINT, MICHIGAN 4
TELEPHONE: (810

November 29, 2010

Yashica Shanae Ellis
4047 Rochdale Drive
Flint MI 48504

Dear Miss Ellis:

On behalf of the Master of Public Administration Program, I am pleased to inform you that your application for admission for the Winter 2011 term has been approved by our Program Faculty Committee. We are looking forward to your participation in the program. The Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies will contact you upon completion of Rackham's certification process in the near future.

Your admission is based on the understanding that you will enroll in PUB/ECN 571: Public Economics when it is next offered at the University of Michigan-Flint; or you may take an equivalent course, with MPA approval, at another accredited institution.

Mr. William Lavery of the Political Science Department will serve as your academic advisor. His telephone number is (810) 762-3470, his e-mail address is blavery@umflint.edu, and his office is in Room 220, French Hall. Please contact him to set up an appointment to discuss the program and course selections.

I would appreciate a response indicating your acceptance of this offer of admission and intention to pursue a Master of Public Administration with a concentration in Administration of Nonprofit Agencies at the University of Michigan-Flint. You may do this by completing the enclosed postcard and returning it to the Office of Graduate Programs within 15 days. We are pleased that you have chosen to undertake graduate study at the University of Michigan-Flint.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "A. Price", is written over the typed name.

Albert C. Price, Director
MPA Program